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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: IRELAND CONSIDERS CUTTING AID TO UGANDA

1. On May 13, Irish Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern announced that the Irish government is considering reducing aid to Uganda by euro 2 million to send a clear message to Ugandan President Museveni regarding political reform. Department of Foreign Affairs Uganda desk officer Jerry Kelliher confirmed to emboff that by the end of May, the GOI will decide on whether to reduce the aid from euro 32 million to euro 30 million. He added that the decision to reduce aid depends on President Museveni's continued steps towards changing the Ugandan constitution to allow for him to serve a third six-year term. According to Kelliher, the GOI is in discussions with the GOU in Kampala and seeks to apply pressure to guarantee the democratic success of next year's general election.

2. According to a May 14 Irish Times article, President Museveni responded to this announcement by saying that Uganda "could do without foreign aid if the Uganda Revenue Authority improved its methods of collection," and that he was only "interested in trade, not aid."

KENNY